

**OPERATING GUIDELINES**  
**SOUTHERN REGION**  
**INCIDENT BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION**  
**Special Edition for Hurricanes**  
**October 2005**

Enclosed are Operating Guidelines for Incident Business Administration activities within the Southern Region. These guidelines emphasize the critical financial and administrative procedures to be followed on incidents within the Southern Region. The April 2004 Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBMH ) provides national direction. One of the primary objectives of these guidelines, is to ensure that Agency Administrators (AA) and Incident Commanders (IC) are reviewing incident costs daily and documenting the reviews. These guidelines are also provided to support Incident Management Team operations and to provide consistency in incident business management operations throughout the region.

Any changes in these guidelines will be negotiated with the Agency Administrator (AA) and Incident Business Advisor (IBA) in advance. Cost efficiency and accountability is mandatory.

**Regional Incident Business Specialist**

The Regional Incident Business Specialist is responsible for the coordination and liaison of Incident Business administrative guidelines and practices for incidents within the Southern Region. This position will be a source of information for national and regional incident business knowledge. For the Southern Region:

Liz Kinney	Work phone:	404-347-2528
	Cell phone:	404-909-0262

**Delegation of Authority/Responsibility**

Title	Name	Cell Phone
Incident Business Advisor (IBA)		

**Incident Business Advisor Responsibilities.**

One or more fully qualified IBA's normally will be brought in to assist the Regional Incident Business Specialist on Type II or larger incidents. The IBA works under the direct supervision of the Regional Incident Business Specialist and provides needed coordination with the Incident Management Team(s) and Area Command(s) during the incident.

The IBA will:

- ✓ Provide recommendations on administrative issues needing resolution.
- ✓ Be a source of national, regional, and local knowledge.
- ✓ Be a helpful consultant (partner) to the incident's command and general staff.
- ✓ The IBA will be a person with extensive incident experiences and is able to effectively work with people.

As a minimum, the Finance Section Chief will arrange for a **daily** flow of information with the IBA. This will include a report of current progress of incident business administration operations, including copies of the current cost projections and obligations.

The Finance Section Chief will contact the IBA 48 hours prior to demobilization to ensure all transitioned financial and administrative processes have been finalized. The IBA will follow-up with Regional Incident Business Specialist to ensure that a smooth transition with the IMT occurs.

All unresolved or open financial items will be documented and the individual responsible for the follow-up action will be identified.

The IBA will participate in the exit interview of each assigned IMT. The IBA will provide a narrative statement of items that went well and items that need improvement

If the IBA is unable to complete the narrative report prior to demobilization of the IMT, the report will be submitted to the Regional Incident Business Specialist within 60 days after the team departs the incident.

The IBA will ensure that financial records are complete and the audit of OF-288's, OF-286's etc. (ITS/ICARS information) left on the incident are documented as complete through the end of the incident for the Incident Management Team (negotiate actual date with IMT). The Finance Section Chief will **certify** this in the **Team Transition Plan**.

The IBA will check the incident property records to ensure that property is recovered and/or disposed of properly on the incident. Property remaining on the incident is documented and **certified** in the **Team Transition Plan**.

### **Cost Containment**

Cost containment in the Southern Region is a high priority. Daily cost validation to ensure the Mission Assignment is valid will be done by projecting costs for the duration incident based on operational projections.

In dealing with cost containment issues, it is important for the IBA to be a partner with the IMT for effective cost containment balances, taking into consideration tactics and strategies relative to the incident. This requires action to highlight inappropriate or questionable procurement requests as well as ineffective use of items under contract, plus exploration of alternatives, whereby joint IC and IBA decision can be made.

Focus on high cost resources, under-utilized equipment, extravagant purchases, sensitive items and property accountability issues. IBA's should raise unresolved cost concerns to the Regional Incident Business Management Specialist, Liz Kinney 404-347-2528 wk or 404-909-0262 cell, who will take the lead to involve other regional staff as needed to ensure a timely resolution of the issue.

### **Supplemental Foods**

The NWCG Supplemental Food Policy dated March 10, 2003, is in effect in R8.

### **Procurement**

A National Buying Unit Team will be assigned to Incident Management Teams. The PUL should communicate with the Supply Unit Leader and Buying Team leader throughout the incident. The open flow of communication between these parties will facilitate acquisition needs, as well as property tracking.

Strict adherence to procedures and policies will be followed. NO specialized items will be purchased without approval from the IBA and/or FEMA. This includes, but not limited to jump drives, cell phones microphones, antenna's. Crew replacement items will only be supplied from approved NFES. See attached crew replacement policy.

Many of the normal restrictions on purchasing supplies and services apply when buying for incident operations. Some exceptions exist, such as commissary items and items in lieu of per diem necessary for operating an incident camp. Procurement personnel should consult with the Incident Business Advisor before purchasing items of questionable nature or questionable quantities. The NWCG Supplemental Food Policy is the standard for the Southern Region.

Restricted items are listed in Appendix B.

Motel and meal tickets may be used or another approved documentation system. If a method other than motel and meal tickets is used, the method must be approved by the IBA in advance. Other approved methods are electronic spreadsheets with room number, names etc. which are receipted by the Logistics Section Chief or Facilities Unit Leader.

### **Cell Phones**

**Use of personal cell phones for official business is not authorized and will not be reimbursed.** Resource Orders authorizing cell phones are for government owned cell phones, these phones should be on nation wide plans, where no roaming or long distance charges are incurred. Costs incurred on federal government cell phones will not be adjusted from project funds to the F Code.

When IMT's/buying teams/area command teams arrive at an incident, they should first check with FEMA to obtain the needed cell phones for their official use. If FEMA does not have cell phones available, the next option is to obtain cell phones through the normal ordering process. Individuals assigned to an incident are to obtain written permission from their Incident Commander prior to requesting a cell phone from FEMA or through the ordering process.

To emphasize, personal cell phones are not authorized and will not be reimbursed.

### **Purchase/Rental of Personal Property**

In accordance with the Federal Acquisition Regulations, the decision to rent or purchase property should be made on a case-by-case basis through evaluation of comparative costs and other factors. The following are factors that should be considered:

- Estimate the length of time the equipment will be used
- Cumulative rental payments for the estimated period of use
- Net purchase price
- Transportation and installation costs
- Maintenance and other service costs
- Whether a rental-with-purchase option is available
- Cost of handling and disposal following the incident

The length of time the equipment will be utilized is often unknown. The use of day/week rental rates may help lower overall costs.

### **Buying Unit Procedures**

As a minimum, when an Incident Management Team is assigned, a Buying Unit Team will be established. Buying unit team members are authorized to use their purchase cards/checks during this incident.

The Incident Business Advisor and/or appropriate official will consult with the Incident Management Team/expanded dispatch to decide when to release a Buying Team.

Buying Team Leader should visit the incident administrative sites and establish open lines of communication with the incident supply unit and the incident procurement unit leader. **Establish a direct ordering system between the supply unit and the buying team to expedite procurement resource orders.** On those incidents where a direct ordering system is not practical, orders should be processed through expanded dispatch. Items available through the national cache system should be ordered through established channels.

## **Property Management**

The Incident Agency unit expects the incident management team to place a high priority on property management. Included in this expectation is the need for the Finance Section to review property issuance (including gas/oil/wcf/other), sign out, and return procedures to ensure proper accountability. The buying team leader should assume responsibility for coordinating with the incident on property tracking. Buying teams are responsible for ensuring that accountable property which they have purchased is tracked and the information available to the incident unit for record keeping purposes.

During the demobilization process, Agency specific forms (e.g., Forest Service AD-112), will be processed when items are not returned to supply. These forms will always be signed by the employee's supervisors.

If property items are not returned by vendors assigned to the incident, a system will be incorporated to ensure the value of missing items is deducted from the payment invoices.

All property treated as replacement will be so described on Agency specific forms, Waybill, or left on the incident for rehab or mop up (manifest to the incident unit). All property left on the unit at the close of the incident, will be properly temporarily transferred on the Agency's form.

The Southern Region has established an Incident Replacement Policy that will be used as a guideline for Supply Unit Leaders and Ordering Managers. See Appendix C

## **Compensation for Injury and Agency-Provided Medical Care**

The IBA will be the contact for compensation and medical treatment. All required copies of injury compensation forms will be forwarded the regional claims specialist, as soon as possible, for disposition. The Incident Management Teams Comp/Claims Unit Leader ensures all original documents are forwarded to the employee's home unit.

All medical services, agency-provided medical care agreements, physicians, burn center, forms, etc., are included in the Emergency Incident Acquisition Plan that will be given to all Finance Sections. If the plan is not readily available, contact the assigned Buying Unit or Incident Agency's Acquisition Section for a copy of the information.

## **Claims**

**Contract Disputes Act Claims:** Procurement Unit Leaders, with delegated authority, are responsible for settling all Contract Disputes Act (CDA) claims involving equipment agreements at the incident. The PUL or Finance/Administration Section Chief shall coordinate with the buying team any claims that cannot be resolved at the incident. The buying team or agency will then be responsible for settling these claims and will coordinate with the agency's procurement official.

At the end of the incident all actual and potential non CDA claims will be fully documented and turned over to the Regional Incident Business Advisor. Use of Incident Case File Envelope (OF 314) is strongly recommended

**Tort/Employee Claims:** Upon arrival to the incident, the Comp/Claims Unit Leader will make contact with the Regional Claims Officer to determine the expectations and discuss the requirements of the claims process. The Regional Claims Officer will provide forms or other documents the Comp/Claims Unit Leader will need for duration of the incident. The Regional Claims Officer will also be available to support the Comp/Claims Unit Leader when issues arise that might require research of unusual situations, authorities, etc.

Before leaving the incident, the Comp/Claims Unit Leader will audit the documentation and prepare a log of all claims, defining what's included and what is left to collect on each claim. The

case files should be enclosed in an Incident Case File Envelope (OF-314). The log and envelopes will be given to the Regional Incident Business Advisor at the end of the incident. A copy will also be included in the incident package.

### **Incident Agency Payments**

After payment packets are reviewed, they are to be forwarded directly to the National Payment Center in Ogden, Utah to ensure timely payment to vendors and contractors.

USDA Forest Service  
Incident Payment Center  
Attn: Maylea Lockard  
324 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
Ogden, UT 84401

Phone: 801-625-5887  
FAX: 801-625-5678

Invoices submitted at closeout of the incident are to be hand-delivered to the Regional Buying Team Coordinator by a Finance Section employee who will be able to discuss incomplete payments or those requiring additional clarification.

Payment packages will be reviewed to ensure they adhere to IIBMHB Chapter 27.0 guidelines.

### **Cost Reporting and Accruals**

The Finance Section Chief and/or Cost Unit Leader will work with the Regional Cost Unit Leader to report incident costs on a daily basis using the ICARS Weekly Summary Reports. The first report will be due within 72 hours from the start of the incident. In addition, both the ICARS Accrual Report and the Accrual Daily Report should be run daily and submitted to the Payment Center in Ogden, UT. These reports can either be faxed or posted to the [www.agencydocs.com](http://www.agencydocs.com) website for retrieval.

### **AD-5 Rates**

AD-5 rates will be determined on the basis contained in the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook.

### **End of Pay Period Time & Attendance Reports**

All assigned Finance Sections will contact the Incident Business Advisor to determine the most efficient and effective means for processing/communicating pay information at the end of each pay period.

### **Law Enforcement**

All criminal investigations will be conducted by the assigned criminal investigators and law enforcement officers, and will be supervised by the Assistant Special Agent in Charge for Enforcement Operations, Jeannie Pollard 404-347-2736.

Other investigations (claims, motor vehicle accidents, etc.) will be done by law enforcement or finance personnel assigned to the incident. Also, other law enforcement work (security, traffic control, etc.) will be assigned to the incident.

**Closeout**

The final Finance Package will meet the new uniform filing scheme for incident records packages. At the end of the incident, the final incident package will be forwarded either by mail, or turned in at the closeout. Mailing address: USDA Forest Service, Fire & Aviation Mgmt, 1720 Peachtree Rd. NW Suite 746N, Atlanta, GA 30309.

The Incident Business Advisor will participate in the exit interview of each assigned Incident Management Team. If time permits, the Incident Business Advisor will provide a verbal assessment of (1) commendable performance, (2) things that went well, and (3) things needing improvement.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Restricted Items**

The following items are either restricted from purchasing, or limited in some manner. Take into account local considerations (i.e. a remote location with limited services and supplies verse being in or adjacent to a full service community where the needed resources are readily available) when applying this direction. Assigned Supply Unit Leaders and/or buying unit teams will refer to this list when purchasing supplies and services for incident operations.

- ✓ Alcoholic beverages of any type are prohibited.
- ✓ Local purchase of newspapers for the incident will be limited to 5 per day per incident up to 250 individuals then limited to 1 for every 50 personnel per day. (Type II or greater)
- ✓ Items that may be provided by the Commissary Operations:
- ✓ Clothing, buttons, stickers, hats, etc., with special or specific printing, coloring, or logo's. Bathing suits or other special clothing to be worn in R&R centers and/or incident camps.
- ✓ Pillows or sleeping bags (other than regular GSA, fire cache type).
- ✓ Orders for specific magazines, newspapers, or other literature.
- ✓ Plants & Flowers
- ✓ WCF and GSA Vehicle modifications/repairs will be coordinated through the local fleet manager.
- ✓ Barbers will only be provided for the military at their request.
- ✓ Fees for the use of recreational facilities (i.e. hot springs) unless associated with R&R.
- ✓ Massage or other therapist services.

**Note: All purchased equipment and personal property will be transferred to the fire cache and will not be retained on or by the District. All rental equipment, with owner's concurrence, will have a lease purchase clause inserted in the procurement document to allow maximum flexibility to meet cost effectiveness goals.**

The following items may be purchased or rented, but with the following limitations:

- ✓ Chairs: Use local cache. If additional chairs are needed, rent with an option to buy.
- ✓ Trailers and motor homes will be used for offices only, not for sleeping purposes.
- ✓ Cots, other than ordered through the cache system, will be justified and approved in writing by the incident commander for health and safety reasons.
- ✓ Information Resource must approve all Automatic Data Processing Equipment.
- ✓ The Forest Telecommunication Manager must approve all telecommunications equipment.

#### **Specialty Items:**

The Agency Administrator or/IBA has the authority to establish additional purchasing restrictions or limitations on specialty items, such as:

Cameras: digital, video, still  
Satellite Telephones  
Laptop Computers  
(electronic organizers)  
Handheld radios  
Facsimile machines  
Printers

Cellular Telephones  
GPS Units  
Personal Digital Assistant

Scanners  
Copy machines

\*Procurement officials must follow agency regulations when purchasing any of the above items. (Property will be contacted to issue property numbers as required.)

## Appendix C

### Incident Replacement Policy

The Team follows the incident replacement process as outlined in the NWCG National Fire Equipment System Catalog on page 47.

- The Supply Unit Leader approves replacement requests.
- If equipment and supplies are available at the incident for replacement, the request is filled at the incident.
- If equipment and supplies cannot be obtained before requesting resource is demobilized, and OF-315 Incident Replacement Requisition will be completed. S numbers will be given for each replacement item.

The process for approving requests follows:

- Chainsaw part requests will be reviewed and approved by the Chainsaw Repair Specialist at the supply cache or, if not available, the Receiving and Distribution Manager.
- Radio or other communication equipment will be reviewed and approved by the Communication Unit Leader.
- Firing device requests will be reviewed and approved by the Operations Section Chief or the Branch Director.
- **All non-standard cache items such as eagle packs, sleeping bags, kevlar pants, headlamps, and other specialized equipment will not be replaced on the incident. These are home unit expenses charged to preparedness (WFPR).**
- The incident replacement request will be signed by the Supply Unit Leader and faxed to Expanded dispatch for S numbers.
- This process may apply to repairable items.

The process to receive S numbers for replacement items can take time.

IHC are to provide the Supply Unit Leader an OF-315 Incident Replacement form at least two shifts prior to demob.

#### **What does this mean to you.....**

- **Expect to receive a like item from the “cache”**
- **Expect to be denied specialty item replacement**
- **Supplies used on the fire will come from stock available in supply or through the OF-315 resource order**
- **Outdated items or property that is worn out (i.e. outdated radios, GPS units, bags, tents) will not be replaced**
- **Expect to complete proper paperwork before lost or destroyed government property items are replaced by the incident**